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The Progressive Farmer.

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DR. FREEMAN'S TALKS.

VIII.—How to Keep Dogs From Breaking Up Your Hen Nests.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

Often when I am traveling through the country I am asked by my friends for strychnine. "Some dog," they say, "has destroyed nearly all the eggs my wife has set this spring, and has broken up two or more setting turkeys; so please give me enough strychnine to do the work, and say nothing." In all these cases I advise the dog-proof nest. So I will take it for granted that some reader of The Progressive Farmer has had eggs sucked by his neighbor's dog (never his own). So I will describe the dog-proof-nest which I have used for many years, and never had an egg sucked from one of them.

Take some plank $\frac{3}{4}$ by 12 inch, and some $\frac{3}{4}$ by 10 inch. Saw a piece from the 12-inch plank $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long for the bottom or floor; also five pieces from same plank twelve inches long and two pieces from the 10-inch plank three feet, eight inches long. This is for the front and back.

To put it together, nail one of the 12-inch pieces across the bottom, piece at the centre and on either side of this middle piece, nail two other pieces twelve inches from the centre piece, then nail on the end pieces. Now, put on the 10-inch stuff, one on back and the other on front, and you have two nests made except the cover and the sawing out the spaces for the hen to get into the nest. Now saw out of the front 10-inch plank a 5 x 7 inch space near each end. This is for the hens to enter. Then saw out the same space off the back end of the two first 12-inch division planks, leaving at least two inches at bottom not sawed out. Now the hen goes in at front near the end and turns towards the centre, and through the second space into the nest next to the centre plank. So this makes two nests, one on each side of the centre piece, the first set up. Now put two 10-inch pieces together in such a way as to shed water for a cover, and the two dog-proof-nests are made. It will be best to saw off the back ends of the two 12-inch pieces before placing them in, as it will be easier done.

This makes two nests which you can put down in the chimney corner and no dog will get your eggs. By the front and back being only ten inches wide, it leaves a two inch space at top to give light and air to the hens. You can make single nests, double nests or long rows of ten or twelve. These nests will save your eggs out in the grove or anywhere you wish to have them. You see the dog has to put his head into the front opening and then around into the other back into the nest before he can get the eggs. You see his neck is not long enough. This nest will save your eggs from the dogs until you go for them, and the doctor's bill for setting the broken legs or arms of your wife or girls from a fall while scrambling in the stable loft for eggs.

H. F. FREEMAN.

Wilson Co., N. C.

Blind Ditches, Open Ditches and Tile Draining.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

As I have recently finished cutting and refilling some ditches on creek and branch bottom lands, I will submit a few thoughts on this subject to your esteemed paper. I commenced blinding ditches about fifteen years ago, and have fully a mile of covered ditches on my farm now. In the greater part of my ditches I have used two planks nailed together as for making a trough, with cross steps about five feet apart, as long as the ditch is wide. I put a slab or rough-edge plank in the bottom of the ditch, and place these boxes on plank, open side down. I use corn-stalks or brush on top of boxes. I have also used pine poles, two in bottom of ditch and three on top, covered with brush, before fitting. Recently have used boxes, made of four planks 1 x 4 inches, without a plank in bottom of ditch. I have had to take up some boxes on account of clogging, but still I think it pays to blind them, as the open ditches have to be cleaned out every spring, owing to the overflow of the creek. I suppose I should have used tiles for under-draining, but I don't know what they cost; besides, the bottom of my ditches are generally quite soft. Owing to the land lost, and the expense of cleaning out open ditches, I think it is economy to blind them, and it is better to do so, as soon as possible after cutting them.

I buy a pair of rubber boots every spring, and while I am using two-horse teams plowing, put one or two of the men to ditching, paying them one dollar per day. This is much cheaper than hiring by the rod, as I have found by considerable experience.

I should be glad to know the cost of tiles; also as to using them in soft ditches.

JOHN McDOWELL.

Mecklenburg Co., N. C.

Blake Johnston's Observations.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

A man never gets too old to learn something. I have been smoothing off the top of my potato ridges with a hoe, to have a nice smooth place to set the plants, and I tell you that was a lot of hard work. But I have now learned a better way. I saw a man running an Eclipse cotton-planter over his ridges and it did the work to perfection; this planter has a roller that follows behind the seed.

We are dry up in this part of the State, but we had moisture enough to get a good stand, and this dry weather is giving us a good chance to get a start of our crops.

The best way to slop hogs that I have ever seen is to put the trough close up to the fence and make a plank shute to run the slop through the fence. And just while I am talking about the hogs, I want want to say that everybody up here keeps hogs up in close pens, and if you have never tried it, gather a few tender weeds and some grass every day for a while, and see how they will improve. A hog gets very tired of that dry corn feed every day. Get good pigs; keep their pen clean; try to feed something they like—and you will get better results.

BLAKE JOHNSTON.

Gaston Co., N. C.

Farming in the Piedmont Section.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

After about the hardest struggle of my life, I have succeeded in getting my crop planted and have begun cultivation. The stand of both cotton and corn is poor, and the cool weather is retarding the growth, especially of cotton. I have sown more grass seed than I usually do. I find there is more profit in hay than any other crop I can raise. I succeeded last fall in getting a stand of alfalfa on a small lot. It is showing up well now. Early in the spring I buried it, and later I inoculated the soil with bacteria obtained from the government. This is my third attempt to grow alfalfa, the first two proving failures. We learn by experience; and I want to say to all who have not tried alfalfa, that the preparation of the land is the main thing. This must be begun two or three years before sowing the seed, by deep plowing, liberal manuring and clean cultivation.

I harvested my first crop of rye and crimson clover this spring. The rye was good, but the clover was a failure. The seed was sown too late. I ordered the seed from Richmond, and it was six weeks from the time the order was sent until the seed came. Next time I shall buy seed from a local dealer or send order earlier in the season. The seed was sown the first of October, but it was too late for this season. Prof. Kilgore said at the institute at Statesville that seed sown as late as October would make a good crop. It may some years, but I would advise farmers not to risk late seeding. Better sow in July or August. Two years ago I sowed the last day of July, and had a fine crop of clover, the best I ever saw. This was clover alone, without rye, and I think this gives better satisfaction, as rye is too early for the clover.

E. S. MILLSAPS.

Iredell Co., N. C.

Latest North Carolina Crop Bulletin.

Much cotton is not yet up on stiff soils in the northern portion; elsewhere most of the crop is now up, and chopping well advanced, with fairly good stands; cool nights are very unfavorable for this crop, causing young plants to die out, and necessitating some replanting; but there are comparative few complaints of poor stands; the crop is backward, but far in advance of last year. Corn is doing fairly well, though it is small; it is being cultivated; growth is slow on account of cool nights; a very large number of reports were received of damage to corn by cut worms chiefly in low ground. Setting tobacco is advancing under favorable conditions, and from one-half to two-thirds of the crop has now been transplanted; it is being injured in some counties by flea-bugs and cut-worms. Farmers are still planting peanuts, which are coming up slowly. Wheat and oats are doing better, and though heading low, the heads seem to be filling well. Gardens, truck crops, especially Irish potatoes, peas and beans are doing nicely. Setting out sweet potato sprouts is underway. The shipments of strawberries are nearly over, and the crop was a large one. There will be plenty of peaches in upland orchards; cherries are ripening, and grapes are in bloom.